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NEWS RELEASE

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ACCESS CARD AND CHIP EXPANSION WILL PROVIDE THOUSANDS OF IDAHO CHILDREN WITH CRITICALLY NEEDED HEALTH INSURANCE

As many of 5,600 low-income Idaho children will be able to get health coverage beginning in July as two new health insurance programs go in effect.

A news conference to announce details of the Access Card and CHIP B insurance plans will be held July 6, at 12:30 p.m. at the Boise Chamber of Commerce, 250 S. 5th Street, the C.W. Moore Building.

Among those speaking at the news conference will be Sandra Bruce, president and chief executive officer of Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise and a leader in the effort to expand insurance coverage to children. “The children’s Access Card program and CHIP B will expand much-needed access to health care for Idaho’s children,” says Bruce. “The Access Card, in particular, is an exciting development for Idaho as it provides a unique new way of financing health insurance. This public/private partnership builds on private industry and supports our state’s businesses.”

Bruce will be joined by Sen. Dean Cameron, prime sponsor of the legislation that created the two health insurance programs and Joe Brunson, deputy director of the Idaho Department of Health & Welfare.

Open enrollment for Idaho's Access Card and CHIP B runs from July 7 through July 16. The 10-day enrollment period gives low income working parents an opportunity to get health insurance for their children. A family of four could make almost \$35,000 and still qualify to get coverage for children up to age 19 from one of the two programs.

The Access Card is a premium assistance program for families who prefer to obtain health coverage through a private insurance company or through their employer. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. A family using the Access Card would receive up to \$100 per child per month (maximum of \$300 per family) to help purchase insurance.

CHIP B is low cost health coverage for Idaho children who don't have insurance and don't qualify for Idaho Medicaid or CHIP A. Income can be up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. CHIP B costs \$15 per child each month. Children up to age 19 within income guidelines may be eligible.

Open enrollment for the two programs is expected to attract many Idaho families. "There a number of people who have expressed an interest in the insurance," says Bryant Ford, an insurance agent in Idaho Falls. "I work with some daycare agencies and many workers there, as well as families who use the daycares, have asked a lot of questions. My office has handed out 30 brochures in the last few weeks."

Families interested in signing up for the insurance during the open enrollment period for the Access Card and CHIP B must submit their application during the July 7-16 time frame or wait until the next open enrollment. Additional information can be obtained by contacting your insurance agent, Idaho Careline at 2-1-1, or going to this internet website: www.idahohealth.org

The news conference will be held in the Boise Chamber Office, 8th floor, of the C.W. Moore Building at the corner of 5th and Front in Boise. Please park in designated "visitor parking" on the east side of the building or use the metered parking on the street.

(Editors: For additional information contact Ross Mason in Boise at 334-0693)